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Vision 2020 Standing Committee Minutes 11/17/2004

MINUTES OF VISION 2020 STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING NOVEMBER 17, 2004

Attendance: Jane Howard, Joey Glushko, Gene Benson, Andrew Fischer, Pete Howard, Elizabeth Karpati, Leslie Mayer, Patricia Watson; and Jack Jones, Barry Faulkner, Louis Krodel from the Commission on Disabilities.

The **minutes** of the previous meeting were accepted as presented.

Peer Communities Study by the Fiscal Resources Task Group:

- Pete Howard presented the completed study, which incorporates suggestions from the review of the draft at the September meeting of the Standing Committee. As mentioned before, Arlington has no true “peer” communities: only three are close to Arlington in as many as 6 of the 18 characteristics studied, and three more are close in 5 of 18. The report is being readied for the Town website. It includes strong caveats about using comparisons with other communities in policy arguments when the communities are often dissimilar.
- The Fiscal Resources group met with Brian Sullivan, Town Manager, and gave him data about the Town’s structure and government. Mr. Sullivan is considering whether to propose any changes, e.g. in having certain positions elective vs. appointive. Changes would require state permission to change the Town’s charter. Any proposed changes should be discussed by the Standing Committee.

Census insert:

- The Commission on Disabilities wants to include questions such as how well Arlington does on educating children with disabilities and mainstreaming them, and on appointing disabled people to committees. Other questions were suggested about hiring, about the temporarily disabled, and about obstacles faced by some non-disabled people such as mothers with strollers.
- The commission members reported that there are funds available for installing curb cuts, and that this has been done west of Town Hall and will start next year east of Town Hall.
- An inventory of places with access problems was suggested. This would include the high school building (“a multilevel maze”) and even Town Hall, where access equipment is present but not always functioning.
- Sue Scheffler of the School Committee submitted some questions (from a survey used by another school district) that she wants included, but the consensus was that most of these would be more appropriately asked of schoolchildren’s parents rather than the whole town. A couple of the questions are similar to ones in our 2004 census survey; Jane will share the results of those questions with Sue.
- Some questions about health and wellness, still being drafted, will also be included.
- Leslie and Heidi will meet on Nov. 30 to put the insert together; bullet points listing task group accomplishments are due by Nov. 29. Patricia and Elizabeth volunteered to proofread.

Other matters:

- Spy Pond Committee leadership and the student representative are still unsettled, but the new high school principal is encouraging involvement of not only students but also faculty. The new SAVE adviser and the “Workplace” program coordinator have already contacted Vision 2020.
- Leslie reported on what the “Workplace” student had already accomplished: they volunteered to remove the goose fence from the berm enclosing the swimming area at the Res, and did the whole job in a couple of hours.
- The Diversity Task Group reported on its efforts to learn how to deal calmly with contentious issues.